



**Front Cover**

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## *By What Authority?*

Two passages of Scripture have held a prominent place in my heart recently: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28).

### **Some Things Change—Others Never Change**

We live in a time of great change. In my lifetime, we have gone in modes of travel from the horse and buggy to fast, fine automobiles and the airplane. The people I used to know as a lad have changed. Occasionally, I meet someone I knew fifty years ago and I scarcely recognize them. I would not have known half my classmates with whom I graduated from high school at our fiftieth reunion if I had met them on the street—they had changed so much. The city in which I now live has changed. In 1947 I conducted a gospel meeting here in Arlington. At that time it was a small town of about 6,000 people. Today, its population is 280,000. One would not recognize it as the same place.

There are some things which do not change. The Bible says that God does not change: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). We are also told that Christ does not change: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). We should not be surprised, therefore, that the gospel of Christ does not change. "And the things thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the **same** commit [or commit these things] thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

May I tell you that I am troubled and discomfited over the changes brethren are endeavoring to make both in the Lord's church and in His word. I would like to go a step further and say that I am tormented in my soul and agonize over the innovations which my brethren in some places seek to introduce into the Lord's house. They mitigate their newly introduced

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practices by explaining that it just constitutes a change in the way of doing things. After all, they say, the world is changing and we must keep up with it. They caption it *diversifying* and Christians have that freedom of choice. They consider it expedient action and one has a right to his own opinion. If you oppose that departure from the old paths, you are branded a troublemaker and have no right to stir up unrest in God's body over an expediency.

## Is Practice Right One Place But Wrong in Another?

So instrumental music at weddings and funerals in our buildings is being advocated or allowed on the grounds that it would be inappropriate to legislate and forbid its use on such occasions. The polemic behind this reasoning is two-fold: (1) it is not worship because it is *not a meeting called by the elders*—it is not *church come together*, is their communication to us, and (2) they further disclose to us that it is a private affair and there should not be any legislation forbidding it. It belongs to the realm of opinion. I can find neither passage nor plausible argument that supports any such conclusions.

### Two Principles to Observe

There are two principles that I would put in the form of questions by which Christians should be governed in their beliefs and practices: (1) is it **authorized** by God in His word, and (2) what **influence** do we have upon others—young or weak Christians and the people in the world? Let us examine these carefully in their order.

The chief priests and elders of the people came to Jesus in the temple and confronted Him as He was teaching. They asked Him: "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" (Matthew 21:23). If these religious leaders of the Jews had listened to Jesus previously, they would have known that all Jesus did and said was by the authority of His Father. Today, we should be controlled in our lives and speech; in our beliefs and practices, by what God has said. That principle runs as a guideline through the whole of the Bible and is spoken hundreds of times. Moses "took the Book of the

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Covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, 'All the Lord hath said will we will do, and be obedient' (Exodus 24:7). Balaam said (though he didn't keep his word), "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak" (Numbers 24:13).

The message in these verses should constitute the rule of action and conduct of our daily lives. What a simple formula to understand and to regulate our behavior. In the face of it, however, some are attacking it. or disavowing it, to do their own bidding and walk in their own ways.

### New Testament Support for Authority Principle

Jesus left his disciples with this modest and understandable directive: "...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Matthew 28:20). An inspired apostle later said: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him" (Colossians 3:17). The *name of Christ* is used many times in the New Testament in different contexts and with many different applications. Sometimes it is used in the sense of

a designation by which to identify a person. "...and thou shall call His name Jesus" (Matthew 1:21). His *name* frequently refers to relationship. "...baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

It has also to do with honor. "Wherefore God also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). There are times when His name refers to the whole system of Christianity. "...to bear *His* name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Many times the *name of Christ* refers to His authority, as in Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus;" "...be baptized every one of you in the *name* of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38); and "... he **commanded** them to be baptized in the *name* of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

That standard which God set in the beginning is found in dozens of passages of Scripture. Listen to a few of these inspired statements written that we might respect and observe that canon of

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authority: "...that you may learn in us not to think of men above that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:6). Paul wrote a letter to Titus, a gospel preacher. In it he said that God "hath in due times manifested His word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior" (Titus 1:3).

Paul's preaching could be understood because *manifested* means "evident, apparent to the senses, obvious, clear, plain." I believe the Bible is the plainest, most understandable, explicable book that has ever been written on the subject of religion. It is a reflection upon the goodness and intelligence of God to say otherwise. There are some things God did not choose to disclose to us and other things about which He said very little. As shown in the passages quoted, God laid down a rule that should serve as a criterion for our conduct in our relationship to Him—that we must do in religion only what He has authorized us in His word. We are told by inspiration that "we walk by faith" (II Corinthians 5:7). We are also apprised of the fact that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

### **Authority Principle Easily Understood**

This truth is further elucidated by Paul in his letter to the Roman Christians: "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith " (Romans 16:25, 26). Notice such terms as (1) "establish you according to my gospel;" (2) "the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation;" (3) "now is made manifest;" (4) "made known to all nations;" (5) "according to the commandment of the everlasting God;" and (6) "for the obedience of faith."

There are several questions which arise from the reading of this passage. How could one be established according to Paul's gospel if that gospel could not be understood—that is, if it is blurred, clouded, and concealed? The apostle uses several terms

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in this one passage to say that it is not obscured and cloaked. He called it a revelation and that word, in the New Testament, means to "take the cover off" so that men might see. He added that the gospel, the preaching of Christ, had been manifested and made known to all nations so they could become obedient to the faith. He wrote this same message to the Colossian Christians, "... but now is made manifest to His saints" (Colossians 1:26). In Hebrews 8:11, the inspired writer of this book said, "...for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest."

Jesus told the woman in Samaria that "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). He declared in that same book, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). God revealed the gospel to the apostles by His Spirit (I Corinthians 2:10). You have been impressed, no doubt, by how much is said on the subject of *truth* in the New Testament. Not only is the word *truth* frequently discussed, but the expression *the word of God*—and related terms like *doctrine* and *teaching* are also discussed in many places. Other words such as *revelation*, *know*, *manifest*, *testify*, *tell*, etc., are also often used.

Note some of these expressions in these verses: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in a few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit;" (Ephesians 3:3-5). When Paul wrote to Timothy he told him that there were those "... which believe and know the truth" (I Timothy 4:3). John wrote to some Christians and reiterated this principle: "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him" (I John 3:19).

In John's second letter, he made this beautiful and understandable statement: "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ [doctrine which is **from** Christ], hath not God" (II John 9). And, in his third letter, John said: "...and ye know that our record is true" (III John 12). While Jesus was still among His disciples on earth, he said to them, "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). I believe we can **know** what Jesus wants us to **know** and to **do** in worship to God and in honor of Himself.

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The passages we have read and considered make plain and obvious what the *authority principle* is. We are told in unambiguous and unmistakable language to do what He has commanded, to walk by faith, to do whatever we do in religion in

the name of Christ (by His authority), to abide in the doctrine which is *from* Christ, to not go beyond what is written, and to obey what has been revealed.

### **Some Conclusions**

Instrumental music is not authorized because (1) it is not mentioned in the New Testament worship (the use of it is going beyond what is written); (2) it was not practiced by the New Testament church (not used for centuries after the close of the first century of inspiration); (3) it is not apostolic (neither taught nor practiced by the apostles); (4) it is not in the doctrine which is **from** Christ; (5) it cannot be practiced in the name of Christ or by His authority; (6) it is not by faith (because faith comes by hearing the word of God); (7) it is not commanded by Christ (we are to do what He commanded us to do); (8) the use of it does not come from hearing the word of God; (9) it is not worshipping in spirit and in truth; therefore, (10) it is not authorized.

Nowhere in the New Testament is the use of instrumental music in worship an (1) explicit statement, (2) implicit statement, (3) approved action or example, or (4) an expedient.

### **A Perverted Definition of Worship**

Some brethren have their own narrow, fabricated definition of *worship*. They make a difference between worship assemblies *called by the elders* of the church and other meetings in which Christians may be gathered. To be worship, they tell us, it must be: (1) corporate worship; (2) a meeting called or authorized by the elders; and (3) comprised of (a) preaching or teaching, (b) praying, (c) eating the Lord's Supper, and (d) singing. I do not believe that such a concocted definition is in harmony with God's word. Who has the authority to invent his own definition of terms and then legislate how and where they shall be put into practice? Let us suppose that

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I am asked to preach a funeral service in one of our buildings on a Saturday afternoon in which one thousand (or two hundred) people are in attendance. In this service, (1) I preach a gospel sermon (as I always do); (2) there are several prayers of thanksgiving and petition offered; and (3) spiritual songs are sung by the congregation. This is not considered to be *worship* by some of our brethren, so an instrument of music can be brought in and used. Or, if you wish, several instruments—organ, piano, violin, guitar, banjo—could be used. Even a musical band or an orchestra might be used.

On Sunday morning I am asked to assist in the service which is comprised of (1) preaching a gospel sermon; (2) uttering several prayers of thanksgiving and petition; (3) eating of the Lord's Supper; and (4) the singing of spiritual songs. Upon what logic or scripture is one of these services classified as *worship* and the other is **not**? What makes it right to have mechanical instruments in one of these functions but wrong in the other? Does the celebration of the Lord's Supper make

one observance *worship* and the preaching, praying, and singing in the other just a matter of ritual or formality? What is a funeral service with preaching and prayers and singing spiritual songs? Is this a parody? A farce? A mockery? Are we playing *church*?

Could I teach a Bible class on Wednesday evening (or morning) in which we have (1) teaching the word of God; (2) prayers led by one or two of the brethren; and (3) singing of spiritual hymns and songs, and use, to accompany our singing, a piano or organ? Especially, what if the Bible study meeting was not called by the elders? What if the elders did not consider it to be *corporate worship*?

A little different scenario: I invite twenty-five of our Christian friends to a Bible study in my home on Tuesday evening and ask some non-Christian neighbors to come along. We study the Bible, sing spiritual songs, and pray together. It is a matter of *expedient decision*, my own *private* business, as some elderships call it, that we coordinate or unite our singing with the playing of an organ? Would this be permissible even though the elders did not call the meeting. Would this service together, which was held for our mutual spiritual upbuilding and the honor of Christ, be *worship*, even though it was not called by the elders and was not considered by them to be *corporate*

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*worship*? If the non-Christian neighbors knew our Biblical stance on using instrumental music in worship, how would they feel about our use of it in such a service as we have described?

### **A Weak Justification**

Some have taken issue with me and endeavored to justify their position and practice by asserting that I have gone into funeral homes and preached funerals where instrumental music was played; or that I have performed wedding ceremonies in denominational church buildings where an instrument was used.

My first reply is that I will preach the gospel anywhere I am invited or have an opportunity—be it a Roman Catholic Church, a Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian sanctuary, or a Hindu Temple! I would go into an African pagan village where they beat the drums and blow on wooden horns if they will allow me to preach Christ to them. I have preached in many villages in South, Central, and East Africa where they did just that and where my audience was filled with village elders, chieftains, and ordinary tribesmen who were polygamists, but that does not mean that I approve of what they do in their religious rituals or their homes. I conducted a funeral in Johannesburg, South Africa, for a man who was not a Christian. I had nothing to do with arranging the service. I feel somewhat like Brother David Lipscomb did when he wrote back in 1876 that he would preach for a church that played the organ, had the mourner's bench, and practiced sprinkling as long as he could preach the Bible without restraint.

### **Practice What One Believes**

Through the years I have been asked to preach funerals and gospel sermons in denominational church buildings. I responded affirmatively to those invitations and I never interpreted them as placing my approval upon what they believed or practiced, nor did they. I am sure, also, that their perception was never that I sanctified what they believed or did. I would add to this that when I preach a funeral, in a funeral home, I have found the funeral directors to be considerate enough of the Christian family to provide recorded **a cappella** singing. There have been times

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when I specifically requested it but the funeral directors generally know the situation and very kindly consider the families convictions.

When we went to Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1950, most of the people in attendance at the services to which we invited them were non-Christians, but we worshipped God and we worshipped without an instrument. Before that date, in 1949, we went into villages in Central Africa, and afterwards, into East Africa. In each case almost the entire audience was made up of non-Christians. We who had gone there to preach the gospel, worshipped the Lord, although the meetings were not *called by the elders of the church*. We sat on logs, or three-legged stools the villagers brought for us to use, under a thorn tree or a wild fig tree. We preached and prayed and sang and, yes, observed the Lord's Supper, and did not have a drum or any other instrument of music—except our voices and our hearts. The church of the Lord in those areas is now very much alive and prospering. According to the logic of some elders and preachers, we would have been perfectly free to use instruments of music because the service was not called by the elders and had not been designated as *corporate worship*. We never had any problems with the natives on this subject. They seemed to understand it accurately and flawlessly. Would to God that some of my brethren in American understood it as well!

### **Is Decision Left to Human Judgment?**

Some elders in a congregation of the Lord's church said to me: "We **do not believe** that every time someone preaches a sermon, sings, or prays that constitutes a worship service of the church. Preaching, singing, and praying can happen anywhere, anytime by anyone.

My reply to those brethren was: "Brethren, I would be interested in your telling me what it does constitute? Is it make believe? Is it entertainment? We preached and prayed and sang in the public square in Mebya, Tanzania, East Africa, and hundreds of people were around. Do you believe we could, or should, have used an instrument of music—maybe guitars and banjos?"

I, along with our preacher students in the Jamaica School of Preaching & Biblical Studies, did street preaching very often in



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the towns and cities of Jamaica. We had preaching and praying and singing. The audiences were made up of a few Christians and many non-Christians. Would it have been permissible or allowable for us to use instruments of music to accompany our singing, even though it was not a "called worship assembly" by the elders or by the church? We were just going out under the great commission of Christ. Did we need any additional commission?

Thus far I have not had any answers to any of these questions. We have brethren who say they believe (and write it in publications) that we should not allow our stand on baptism, the Lord's Supper, instrumental music, etc., to divide us from the denominations—that we should unite with them upon the things we hold in common. I wonder if they feel that we should be in fellowship with the Muslims and the Hindus? The Muslims' sacred scriptures, the Koran, teaches their followers in some thirty passages to believe in Christ, and you may be a Hindu and believe in Christ.

Or, what about that multitude of preachers and churches who claim to believe in Christ but doubt or deny that He was born of the virgin Mary, or that He was raised from the dead? Where do we draw the line? Maybe I should ask; where does the Bible draw the line?

Take notice of what Jesus said on this subject: "I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). He was saying that if you do not believe that I am the Son of God, and all that is implied in that statement—such as the virgin birth, His miracles, His death and resurrection, you will die in your sins and you cannot go to heaven. The Lord asked those people: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God" (John 9:35)? If you believe in Him, do you believe in His word? Is there any such dichotomy? You believe in Christ but do not believe in His doctrine? When have you heard a sermon on *sound doctrine* and *false doctrine*? You accept Christ but think the church is not important? You believe that the 20,000 denominations in Christendom comprise the one true church? The 2,050 churches in America all belong to Christ and that they are united in what they hold in common? We certainly have brethren who claim to believe that. They teach it.

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How much does one have to believe about Christ to be a Christian? Do we have to believe in the kind of unity He taught? "Neither pray I for these [apostles] alone, but for them also that shall believe on Me through their word [message]; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17: 20, 21).

The Moslems believe in Christ. The Koran charges them to believe in Him about thirty times and threatens them with damnation if they do not. There are 880,550,000 of these people in the world. Are they encompassed or embodied in this *unity of the one body* of which we hear so much about in our time? These

brethren of whom I speak have no problem in fellowshipping the denominations who meet their criteria—although I do not know just what their criteria are!

## The Psallo Argument

There are those brethren who argue in favor of mechanical instruments in worship. Some base the validity and soundness of their belief on the use of the word *psallo* (*ψαλλο*). They tell us that in the Old Testament the word meant "to play an instrument." They further tell us that the early church understood it that way and that it is a bona fide argument to support its use. I would like for us to examine the word and then look at its use in Ephesians 5:19 and in Colossians 3:16.

Liddell & Scott, in their Classical Greek Lexicon, p. 2018, define *psallo* (*ψαλλο*) as: "pluck, pull, twitch, twang. Send a shaft twanging from the bow. A carpenter's red line, which is twisted and then suddenly let go, to leave a mark. Later, sing to a harp."

F. Wilbur Gingrich, in his Shorter Lexicon, p. 219, says: "Sing, sing praise, Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:13." It is evident from this that he was giving the New Testament definition.

Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. III, pp. 490, 491, 493, 494, 495, and 499 says: "*psallo* meant originally to touch, then to pluck the string, to cause it to spring, of the string of a bow. To play a stringed instrument, to

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pluck strings with the fingers." "*Psalmos* is plucking the string of a bow. In the Old Testament and Judaism, it is to play, especially when the instrument is mentioned. Hence one must take into account a shift of meaning in the LXX (Septuagint) in other passages in which the idea of playing is not evident." "Apart from prayer and singing of psalms it is associated with sacrifices in the temple." "The literal sense by or with the playing of strings, still found in the LXX is not employed figuratively." "*Psalmos* means a Christian song in general."

Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 441: "To touch, to move by a touch, to twitch, to strike the strings or chords of an instrument. In the New Testament, to sing praises—Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:13." "*Psalmos* in the New Testament, a sacred song, psalm."

Moulten & Milligan, Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 697: "Play on a harp." "But in the New Testament, as in James 5:13—to sing a hymn."

Abbott-Smith, Manual Greek Lexicon, p. 487: "To pull, twitch, twang, as a bow string. Later to sing to a harp, sing psalms (LXX). In the New Testament, to sing a hymn, sing praise," and he called the case "Dative Instrumental, I Corinthians 14:15."

Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 675: "To pluck off, to rub, wipe, to handle, touch. To pluck off, to pull out—the hair. To cause to vibrate by touching, to twang. To touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument that they greatly vibrate.

"In the New Testament, to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praise of God in song, James 5:13. Sing praises in honor of God in song. Making melody, Ephesians 5:19. I will sing God's praises indeed with my whole soul stirred and borne away by the Holy Spirit, but I will also follow reason as my guide, so that what I sing will be understood alike by myself and by the listeners."

Westcott & Hort, Greek New Testament, in the Lexicon portion of their grammar, p. 211: "To strike a musical instrument, to sing hymns—James 5:13; Ephesians 5:19, Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15."

Bullinger, Critical Lexicon & Concordance to the English & Greek New Testament, under *psallo*, *make melody*, "to touch, to twitch, pluck the hair or beard; but especially a string, to twang.

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Then to touch the lyre or harp, to play. In the New Testament, to sing."

Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, p. 296: "*Psao* (*πσαο*) properly a touching and then a touching of the harp or stringed instruments with the finger or plectrum (the twanging of the bow string). Then, Trench quotes Augustine on the essentials of a hymn: "(1) It must be sung (2) It must be praise (3) It must be to God."

Green, Brief Introduction to New Testament Greek, p. 528: "To sing, to chant, accompanied with instruments, to sing psalms." He gave the New Testament definition only.

### **Some Necessary Conclusions**

Several things are very evident from these definitions of *psallo* by these Greek grammar scholars:

- (1) The word *psallo* originally meant "to pluck, to twang, to pull."
- (2) The object had to be named in order to know what was being pulled, plucked, or twanged. It might be the hair, the whiskers, a bow string, or a carpenter's line.
- (3) In the Septuagint Old Testament (LXX), it sometimes meant to pluck the

strings of an instrument, and sometimes it meant to sing praises to God. I am told by those who have researched the word in the Old Testament Hebrew that the translation of *zamar* by the Greek word *psallo* is always followed by the preposition and the name of the instrument. That certainly makes sense because, even in the original use of the word long before New Testament times, the instrument or the object had to be named, else one would not know what was being *twitched* or *twanged*.

- (4) In the Old testament, the word was defined "to sing," as well as "to play a stringed instrument." This should be conclusive proof that the instrument is not inherent in the word. It was used so often with the playing of the harp or lyre that it came to be implied or inferred. Some

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have presumed that the instrument is a part of the word even though it is unexpressed. It is somewhat like the word *baptism*. This word is so frequently associated with *water* in the New Testament and in our practice that the element does not have to be mentioned or named for us to know that it is *water baptism*. The word *water*, however, does not indwell the word *baptism*. There are many uses of the word *baptism* that has nothing to do with water.

- (5) We observed in all the cases of the lexicon grammars we examined that, in the New Testament, the word *psallo* meant to sing praises to God. Or, to put it a little more literally, "to pluck the strings of the heart." Kittel said the word was used figuratively.

### Other Arguments Refuted

There are other arguments that some of our brethren use in defense of the use of instrumental music in worship. More than forty years ago, some Christians who had come out of New Zealand in the early part of the century and had settled in the Central African country of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Bulawayo (city), asked me and others of our group to preach for them on Sundays and conduct gospel meetings. They did not use instruments in any of their services.

These people were very nice, friendly, and hospitable. They invited us to their homes for meals. In our discussions, I remember very well an argument that was made in favor of mechanical instruments of music in worship. It began with the quotation of Ephesians 5:19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The proponents of the instrument in worship asserted that "in the heart" in this passage was used adverbially and should be translated "heartily." That is, "we should make music heartily." With great spirit and emotion, they tried to impress this view upon us and they used the example that "a young boy plays football (soccer) heartily."

Recently, I have noticed in published writings that some of our brethren today, in an effort to defend the use of instruments of

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music in worship, are using the same old argument. They say it is the *manner* in which we "sing and make melody." This is not so at all. It is certainly true that we should sing praises to God heartily, but this is not what the passage says or is teaching. I have already shown, by quoting some of the language scholars of the New Testament, that "in the heart" is a prepositional phrase in the *Dative Case*. Abbott-Smith called the case *Dative Instrumental*. Whether you know the grammar of it or not, the simple English context says that the music is made *with* and *in* the heart.

The Bible was not written for scholars. If one will read and study carefully all that God has said on any subject, he will have the truth on that subject. What I disclaim is the argument that some brethren are making today that there is no God-given pattern in the New Testament for the church or for worship. They, then, point to the human imperfections in the first and twentieth centuries in congregations of the Lord's body to support their stand. They have missed the truth a thousand miles. One wonders if these brethren have taken the time to read all those passages which have to do with God's pattern of things. "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exodus 25:8, 9). "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (v. 40).

The Hebrew writer quoted that passage from the Old Testament to teach us a lesson in the New Testament age: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For, 'See, saith He, that you make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount'" (Hebrews 8:5). I looked at this passage in the Septuagint (LXX): "Thou shalt make for me according to all things which I showed thee in the mountain; even the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all of its furniture: so shalt thou make it."

*Skene* (σκηνή) is the word for tabernacle and it means "where God dwells." In the New Testament the church is called the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man (Hebrews 8:2). Then, in chapter 9:11, the divine writer calls it "the greater and

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more perfect tabernacle." One of the lessons he was teaching is that we must construct the new tabernacle (the church) "according to the pattern."

John the apostle spoke on that same subject in Revelation 11:1: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure

the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." The temple in Jerusalem did not exist at this time, and had not for thirty years, for it had been destroyed in A.D. 70. The word temple, (*ναός παός*), means the same thing that tabernacle means: "where God dwells." The church is spoken of as the tabernacle and the temple of God repeatedly in the New Testament.

John, thus, said, "measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." He is talking about the church! If there is not any pattern for these things, why would John, an inspired apostle, give that plain and forceful directive to the churches to whom the letter was addressed? Is it possible to measure the worship of the brethren telling us today, as the Christian Church and other denominations have been arguing for more than 100 years, that the subject is so indistinct and unclear that we should not make any kind of decisions about it. I disavow their claim that it is obscure and that the Lord has not legislated anything on the subject. We simply need to follow the pattern that has been given to us by the apostles.

### **The Meaning of *In (en)* in Greek**

Let me quote what some other scholars say about the use of the preposition *in (en)*. This preposition *in (en)*—Greek) is used thousands of times in the New Testament and has many applications—as with reference to time, relationship, and place, to indicate close connection and spiritual standing. Arndt & Gingrich tell us in their exposition of its uses that it:

- (1) Introduces the means of instrument; so it is called *Dative Instrumental*. That means the instrument with which something is accomplished. In the case of this passage of Scripture, the *instrument* with which we "make

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melody" is the heart. That should not be difficult to understand. Instead of playing a harp or an organ, we "make melody with the heart."

- (2) But these same scholars, along with others, notify us that the preposition *in (en)* is used as a *Dative Locative*. This has reference to the "place wherein" the action occurs. Liddell & Scott say that "the oldest and commonest usage is that of place"—that is location. It also "expresses relation, manner, and purpose."

Kittel, the German scholar, has this to say about the heart (*kardia*): "In the heart dwell feelings, emotions, and passions. The heart is the seat of understanding, the source of thought, and reflection. The heart is the seat of the will, the source of resolves. The heart comes to stand for the whole inner being of a man—the center of the inner life and the seat of all the forces and functions of the soul and spirit."

So, the Scripture statement, "make melody in the heart" tells us the *instrument* with which it is done; but it also tells us *the location* where it is done! To explain it

further and simplify it, we say: "John crossed the river in a boat." "In a boat" is an indirect object in the Dative Case. But it is also *locative* and *instrumental*. It informs us what the instrument or means was by which John crossed the river; and it reveals the location of John during the time he was crossing the river. He was "in a boat." There are two problems with making the prepositional phrase "in your heart," adverbial—"heartily." First of all, it is not an adverb. It is a prepositional phrase in the Dative Case. Secondly, what do you do with pronoun "your" heart. Should the passage read, "and make melody in *your heartily* to the Lord?" I am afraid that would not make very much sense! But, generally, false doctrine doesn't make sense.

### **Governed by the Authority Principle?**

If we are not governed by the *authority principle*—of being allowed to believe and practice anything in religion which is not explicitly forbidden, pray tell me what we cannot do that gives us pleasure and satisfaction personally? If we follow this kind of specious argument, which is really distorted and deceptive,

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why could we not burn incense in worship, substitute pouring or sprinkling for baptism, pray for the dead in worship, practice auricular confession of sins to a preacher or priest, worship the cross, images, relics, kiss the feet of the image of Peter (although Peter's image in the Vatican today was once the Roman God Zeus in the Parthenon!), use the mourner's bench, and dance and leap and shout in worship? We have some of these things spoken of in the Bible. David said, "Let them praise His name in the dance; Let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people" (Psalm 149-3, 4). "Oh, clap your hands, all ye people! Shout unto God with the voice of triumph (Psalm 47:1).

### **Is It Christian Freedom?**

This announcement was publicly made: "After some exhaustive study, lengthy discussion, and prayerful requests to God, we find it to be inappropriate for us to legislate and forbid the use of musical instruments on private occasions such as weddings and funerals. We find no specific direction from God in the Word or Spirit regarding this matter. We, therefore, believe it to be in the realm of Christian freedom."

Assuming this position, I have wondered if there were anything in the New Testament that would *forbid* me from offering a beautiful white lamb in my worship to God *in the called assembly of the church*? Or, could I do this in a *private* assembly in our building where no more than two or three hundred Christian friends came together for the sacrifice? I have thought how graphically depictive and suggestive the blood of the lamb could be in reminding me of the precious blood of Jesus. Perhaps, it would be more vivid and meaningful to me to do this every first day of the week. What an eloquent and forceful memorial it

could be to my Christian friends. It would elevate us to the clouds, so to speak, and exalt us to spiritual heights undreamed of hitherto.

I can think of so many things to support such an act of worship. It would cheer our hearts, exhilarate our spirits, brighten our view of the cross, vitalize our mood of worship and put one on top of cloud nine. Who could find an objection to anything so beautiful and so soul-stirring as this kind of sacrifice?

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Most Christians would be repulsed by any such suggestion and it would evoke a response of rejection. Not many would accept the explanation: "We find it to be inappropriate for us to legislate and forbid" such an offering.

### **God's Commands Inclusive and Exclusive**

A simple lesson in Bible study we need to learn is that God's commands are both *inclusive* and *exclusive*. That is, they include what the Lord has mentioned and they exclude anything and everything He has not mentioned. That principle runs like a thread through the entire Bible. God's people did not always respect and observe it, but they understood it! "And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord" (Numbers 26:61). What kind of fire was that? Leviticus 10:1 answers the question for us: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not." What difference would it make as long as they were sincere in burning incense to the Lord? The answer is: God had not commanded it and *strange* fire was excluded.

There is another graphic example in II Samuel 6:6, 7: "And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and God smote him there for his error and there he died by the ark of God." Uzzah seemed to be trying to help by preventing the Ark of God from falling from the cart to the ground and being broken and destroyed. The answer to that is this: no one but the priests and the Levites were to touch the ark of the Covenant. Of the Kohathites, the writer of Numbers tells us: "And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof." And again: "And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary; and the other did set up the tabernacle against they came" (Numbers 10:21).

We know that God is a God of love, of grace, and compassion. Jesus is able and willing to "save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25). But we need to

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remember also that God is a God of wrath: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). For instance, Mark records Jesus as saying: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). We are authorized to preach the **gospel**. We are commissioned to do so throughout the pages of the New Testament. By that I mean that He has *charged us, entrusted to us, delegated to us* the responsibility of preaching the **gospel** to the world. That charge is also *exclusive*. That is, it restricts us. To put it into the simplest of language, it *bars* us from preaching anything except the gospel. Can we not preach human experiences, modern ideologies, philosophies of this world that we have believed for eons, and scholarship and secular humanism? What prevents us from doing so? These doctrines are popular; they are widespread; they are believed by millions of people. Why can we not preach all these things? We are not *authorized* to do so by the word of God. The Great Commission of our Lord to preach the gospel to the world *excludes* the preaching of any other message than the gospel of Christ.

### **Application of the Principle**

When Paul instructed the Christians in Ephesus (Ephesians 5:19) to "speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" that excluded (disallowed) the singing of other kinds of songs. We can say that the Bible prohibits the singing of *cowboy songs* in our worship, whether or not it is a *called meeting by the elders*, or considered to be *corporate worship of the church*. It outlaws the use of *popular, secular tunes*; it prohibits *bluegrass and hard rock* in our praises to God.

Then, Paul told us by inspiration that we must *sing and make melody with (en) our hearts* to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19). That instruction was given to individual Christians as well as to the church at Ephesus. When we meet together (200 or 1,000 people—call it *private* or *public*), for the funeral of a friend or brother, and we preach and pray and sing, you can be sure that this Bible principle precludes (it shuts out; it prevents) singing with an organ, piano, guitar, banjo, a bagpipe, or a flute! If that is not so, there is nothing to prevent a Christian from offering a lamb to

God as a memorial of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

### **The Statement of a Scholar**

I remember very well what Brother Eldred Echols, an author and commentator, wrote many years ago in *The Christian Advocate*, a paper published in South Africa: "The second false premise upon which division thrives is the doctrine of expedience—that whatever the Bible has not specifically condemned, and which seems a desirable addition, is allowed in the worship of God. Since an expedient is a course dictated by practical wisdom, adoption of this principle throws the floodgates open to admit into the worship of God and into the organization and

practice of the church anything and everything that passes the court of human judgment.

"Practically every digression that has laid waste and destroyed the church of God, and divided Christendom into a thousand warring factions, has been justified upon the grounds of expedience. When God gives a command and specifies the way in what that command is to be obeyed, every other way is excluded. I have never seen a Scripture forbidding the wearing of the scapular or the burning of incense in worship, but the silence of the Scriptures forbids their use. To use them would not be abiding by the doctrine of Christ, and 'he that goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God' (II John 9). This same principle also excluded sprinkling for baptism, infant baptism, and instrumental music in worship.

"All these things have caused grievous divisions in Christendom and have robbed the church of its unity and strength. I cannot believe and practice these things because they go beyond what is written (I Corinthians 4:6). The first little innovation is a leak in the dike. In the words of a great gospel preacher, Moses E. Lard, spoken in 1864: 'The spirit of innovation never retraces its steps. When once it sets in to accomplish a certain object, accomplish that object it will, though ruin marks every step of its advance. Church history teems with proof of this.'" It seems that many never learn this lesson from history, and so are destined to make the same damaging and detrimental mistakes which led the church into apostasy.

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### **Observation of a Denominationalist**

I read in a denominational periodical a few days ago an article under the heading of *In Search of Christianity*, and it asked some very timely, searching questions. I felt depressed that the questions and comments made were not authored by some of my brethren. "What happened to New Testament Christianity," this writer asked. "Would Jesus recognize the religion that calls itself by His name?" Why the stark contrast between New Testament teachings and modern Christianity? What have those who claim to be friends and followers of Christ done to Christianity? Study Christ's teachings closely. You can only conclude that He would be alarmed, even angered, by the many beliefs and practices attached to His name today. How did Jesus' central teachings become so confused and misunderstood? How did Christianity come to create Jesus in its own image? How much of modern Christianity is not faithfully following everything Jesus Christ said we should do. We seem to follow the Jesus of the New Testament only when it pleases us. When its easy and when we agree. It has become a pick-and-choose way of life subject to the whims of its followers and the shifting sands of cultural interpretations."

This article from a denominational periodical should give us pause—an interruption long enough for us to take stock of what we are doing and where we are headed. You would think that this is the kind of preaching and writing which would be done

by our own brethren! I can remember when it was preached, but in recent years I have not heard much on the question of *Sound Doctrine*.

## **When the Instrument Questions was Young**

I also remember what J.W. McGarvey, a great pioneer preacher, said: "It is manifest that we cannot adopt the practice of using instrumental music without abandoning the obvious and only ground on which a restoration of primitive Christianity can be accomplished, or on which the plea for it can be maintained. Such is my profound conviction and consequently the question with me is not one concerning the choice or rejection of an expedient but the maintenance or abandonment of a fundamental and necessary principle. I hold that the use of the instrument is

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sinful and I must not be requested to keep my mouth shut in the presence of sin whether committed by a church or an individual" (*Apostle Times*, 1881).

How would I be able to convince a sinner to cease practicing a doctrine and discard it on the grounds that the New Testament does not authorize it, if I myself refuse to relinquish the same doctrine or a similar one for which there is no Scriptural authority? If I preach to my friends in the world that our effort has been solely to restore New Testament Christianity, untarnished and unembellished by human interference, even as it was taught by the apostles in the first century, how can I convince him (the unbeliever) to believe and practice a doctrine which is not found in the New Testament at all? How do you restore something that did not exist?

Dr. B.B. Frederick, a brother who lives in Arlington, Texas, made this statement in his tract *Music in the Early Church*: "For some seven or eight hundred years after the church was established, any type of instrumental music in the assembly was unthinkable."

Even preachers and scholars in the denomination world knew that this principle was true. Such men as Layman Coleman, Presbyterian author, Charles Spurgeon, Baptist preacher and commentator, John Calvin, founder of Presbyterianism, Adam Clarke, Methodist commentator, Albert Barnes, American Presbyterian commentator, William Hedricksen, commentator, authors of the *Pulpit Commentary*, James Knight, F.F. Bruce, and many more standard Bible scholars, all opposed its use. And yet, some of our brethren, 100-150 years after we fought that battle, find excuses in an effort to justify its use in worship to God

## **The Influence Principle**

This brings up the second principle I mentioned early in this lesson. What influence is had upon the weak and young Christian? What message are we sending to the non-Christian,

who we are trying, or should be trying to convert? How would this kind of action on our part appear to the world? When the man who is not a Christian sees the organ, or whatever instrument or instruments, used in our building, how will he react to our urging him to become a New Testament Christian? Should we be concerned about convincing and persuading the unbeliever? Should we be aware and even disturbed about the spiritual condition of the young and weak Christian? "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (I Corinthians 8:13). There is hardly any lesson to the Christian given more emphasis in the New Testament than that of making sure that his own life, teachings, and practice harmonize with the will of God. Paul told young Timothy, "... but be thou an example of the believers" (I Timothy 4:12).

The words of Solomon are pertinent on this subject: "If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked" (Proverbs 29:12). And Hosea said: "And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward their doings" (Hosea 4:9)

The apostles spoke often in this context to this particular point: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 3:1). "...who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 5:7). Paul spoke of the teaching and conduct of some brethren being such as to "overthrow the faith of some" (II Timothy 2:18). His language to the Philippian church was clear: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

This apostle warned the elders of the church of Ephesus: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:29-32).

Please give attention and heed to what Paul has to say about *the word of His grace*. It can be understood; it can be obeyed. In speaking of the message we transmit to the *outsider*, Peter said: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God..." (I Peter 2:12). Paul continues by instructing the Thessalonian Christians: "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22).

And to Titus these words of warning and instruction: "...Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain ...this testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:11, 13).

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight (Isaiah 5:20, 21).

I truly believe there are many of our own preachers today who either do not recognize false doctrine, or refuse to talk about it. What is "sound doctrine" in our time? Paul charged and condemned some Christian Jews in Rome: "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Romans 2:24). I ask again, what message are we transmitting to the world when we use mechanical instruments of music in our building for weddings and funerals? Is this a matter of concern or indifference to us? The question needs to be always in our hearts: what message are we conveying to the young and weak in the church and to the non-believer outside the church?

Both Matthew and Luke say that Jesus used severe language about those whose influence upon others was detrimental: "But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." (Luke 17:2). This is a matter of grave concern. Many of us who have preached for a long time are more disturbed about the direction of the church today than ever before. This is not

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due, I am convinced, because we are a *bunch* of traditionalists, legalists, and *old fogies*. I truly hope we will wake up in time to prevent a "falling away."

### **A Word to Heed**

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of **hearing the words of the Lord**: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11, 12).

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